

# Eastern Area Coordination Center

## Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

Updated September 21, 2011

**Subject:** Fuel moisture deficits and drought conditions across portions of the Great Lakes.

**Discussion:** Drier than normal conditions through the end of the summer months led to below normal fuel moistures and elevated NFDRS and Canadian FDRS indices across portions of the Great Lakes. The driest portions of the Great Lakes compact were the northwest and north central parts as well as the southwest and south central portions.

The ongoing Pagami Creek Fire in the Minnesota arrowhead demonstrated how these dry summer fuels, when subjected to high temperatures and strong winds, can produce extreme fire behavior. Widespread frost events which have occurred have also cured live grasses leading to lower overall fine fuel moistures.

The medium range weather and fire potential outlook calls for elevated conditions to persist into the end of September. Recent wetter and cooler conditions through mid September curtailed short term potential. However, warmer and drier conditions are anticipated through the end of the month, especially across the western Great Lakes.

These conditions alone do not spell imminent danger in the days and weeks ahead. Days are shorter and humidity recovery is becoming more consistent. But they should convince everyone that vigilance is still in order. Assume that the remaining green fuels in open areas will burn readily. Continue to monitor forecasts daily for above normal temperatures, poor humidity recovery, and wind events as indicators of potential for rapid fire spread, intense burning and extreme fire behavior.

**Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:**

- Multiple jurisdictions transitioning beyond initial attack
- Mop-up and lingering heat will require greater time, resources, and caution.
- Expect greater intensity and quicker transition to larger fires.
- Expect greater resistance to control at all levels; reliance on traditional barriers and techniques are ineffective
- Expect the complexity and scope of fires to accelerate more quickly

**Mitigation Measures:**

- Stay informed of current conditions, indicators and weather. Obtain a thorough, local briefing.
- Anticipate problem fire behavior and quick changes in complexity.
- Communicate conditions and observed fire behavior; stay tuned in.
- Anticipate the need for quicker, earlier escape routes to substantial safety zones; validate communications with resources; and know where and what the fire is doing and who is watching out for you and your resources. Continually rehearse these needs.

**Area of Concern:**

- Northern and southern Minnesota, portions the UP and northwestern LP of Michigan, and southern Wisconsin.